

**Summary of  
Meeting of the Taunton Bay Advisory Group  
6 PM Tuesday April 15<sup>th</sup>  
Hancock Town Hall  
Facilitated by Sherman Hoyt**

Advisors present: Slade Moore, Steve Perrin, Frank Dorsey, Shep Erhart, Mike Briggs, and John Sowles.

Public members: Carol Korty (Lamoine Conservation Commission) and Beth Bisson (Maine Sea Grant).

Summary of last meeting – John asked that unless he hears otherwise, the March summary will be considered approved by next Tuesday.

The group then discussed the role of non-advisors at meetings. At the last meeting, we invited input from harvesters. Although we followed protocol by inviting the public to provide comments, Lee was concerned we need to reinforce policy. The group reiterated that once we get the input needed, then the Facilitator will thank the public and the group moves on.

Frank asked to hear about what internal DMR reaction is to the proposed regulations. John reported that from the Commissioner's office on down, there is enthusiasm and curiosity over how this will go. We are all, however, very concerned about resources to carry this out. Already, this project has diverted resources from other projects the Department had planned such as the statewide drag management initiative.

John reviewed how the public and harvesters were notified of the upcoming hearing and what would be covered at the hearing; what are the available resources, who sets the allotment, how it is set, what are targeted resources, where are the areas and times that are sensitive and what information will be protected as confidential.

Frank asked what the role of TAUNTON BAY ADVISORY GROUP is at hearing. John said everyone is a citizen and could speak as an advisor or individual or both, either directly at the hearing or in writing for up to 10 days following hearing.

Lee wants harvesters to participate in the resource assessments. John was resistant believing that their participation would slow the process down, create more work with little benefit. The group disagreed wanting transparency in process. They also wanted to be involved with quota setting process. John agreed if the group was willing to devote the May meeting to this and not hold a separate meeting. At that meeting, we would come up with the process for coming up with 4 numbers, not the numbers themselves. That still would be left to DMR.

Slade thought we needed to let harvesters know where we probably won't allow harvest. Steve express discomfort with John's earlier stated figure of allowing 80% of harvestable mussel resource.

Frank suggested that if this rule passes, then allocation should be part of the discussion.

John explained what information would be protected as confidential and the difference between planning information, harvest statistics and financial business information. John agreed to send an outline to group of what he would cover at hearing and asked for suggestions for improvement.

The group then moved beyond the rule and immediate to the longer range goals and objectives. We agreed that if we had a schedule of meetings, that would help shut off some of the detail discussion that we tend to fall into and help us move us closer to a comprehensive plan. Sherm then asked each member to reveal their 3 highest priorities for next work.

Frank –

1. baseline of the 4 managed resources,
2. HSC,
3. eelgrass

Antonio –

1. pollution throughout estuary
2. shorebirds

Steve – (Beal reported the slowest growing clams in Maine – so are these worth opening and why?)

1. characterize shorebird forage base
2. describe ecological role of mussels and eelgrass in TB
3. identify and map ecosystem parts
4. set up a water quality monitoring program

Slade –

1. enhanced eelgrass monitoring in water (in situ monitoring)
2. WQ monitoring – especially turbidity
3. Slade's sensitive areas – mapping ecological elements

Lee –

1. impact of harvest gear – done by industry
2. develop framework for coordinating harvesters and governance (ie. process).
3. municipal ordinance – facilitation
4. turbidity

Mike-

1. public access
2. pollution –
3. closed areas

Shep-

1. develop framework of coordinating efforts
2. Water quality
3. mapping ecological elements

John - (noted he already was planning water quality work for this summer)

1. Ecological elements map
2. HSC survey
3. shorebirds

Then followed a brief discussion on Horseshoe crab work and the value of continuing time series. John reported difficulty in finding money to continue the series.

Steve reminded us of sea level rise and climate change. If we ever land a windfall, let's keep it in mind.

Antonio summarized the groups priorities.

Assessments appeared to be a given. After the assessments, the priorities seem to be:

1. ecological element maps
2. pollution and Water quality, especially turbidity
3. framework for coordinating efforts and tri- town ordinances to manage the bay.

John suggested that given the short time frame that we hire someone to pull together the maps now, so they can be used immediately. He proposed Slade as the person most familiar with the science and bay. John noted that there might be a perception of a conflict of interest but that he (John) was completely comfortable justifying hiring Slade. John asked if anyone in the group had concerns. Hearing none, John said he would develop a scope of services and proceed with a small contract to begin making the ecological element map.

Discussions followed about how the maps would be used. We agreed that the gathering, compiling and synthesizing data and providing some sort of sensitivity to disturbance would be one step. Deciding actual management, after considering the report, is a second, separate step. This second step will balance ecological and human uses bearing in mind implications to both.

Carol asked if current assessments will be incorporated. Slade answered, yes, when it is available.

The group agreed that the next meeting, on May 20, would be dedicated to harvester participation to begin the resource assessment process.

Meeting adjourned.